

WHERE THERE'S A WILL

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AUTHOR OF

THE CIRCULAR STAIRCASE, THE MAN IN LOWER TEN, WHEN A MAN MARRIES

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CHAPTER I.

When it was all over Mr. Sam came out to the spring-house to say good-by to me before he and Mrs. Sam left. I hated to see him go, after all we had been through together, and I suppose he saw it in my face, for he came over close and stood looking down at me, and smiling. "You saved me, Minnie," he said, "and I mean to tell you we're grateful; but do you know what I think?" he asked, pointing his long forefinger at me. "I think you've enjoyed it even when you were suffering most. Red-haired women are born to intrigue, as the sparks fly upward."

"Enjoyed it!" I snapped. "I'm an old woman before my time, Mr. Sam. What with trailing back and forth through the snow to the shelter-house, and not getting to bed at all some nights, and my heart going by fits and starts, as you may say, and half the time my spinal marrow fairly chilled, not to mention putting on my over-shoes every morning from force of habit and having to take them off again, I'm about all in."

"It's been the making of you, Minnie," he said, eyeing me, with his hands in his pockets. "Look at your cheeks! Look at your disposition! I don't believe you'd stab anybody in the back now!"

(Which was a joke, of course; I never stabbed anybody in the back.) He opened the door and a blast of February wind rattled the window-frames. Mr. Sam threw out his chest and his sweater and waved me another good-by.

"Well, I'm off, Minnie," he said. "Take care of yourself and don't sit too tight on the job; learn to rise a bit in the saddle."

"Good-by, Mr. Sam!" I called, putting down Miss Patty's dolly and following him to the door; "good-by; better have something before you start to sleep you warm."

He turned at the corner of the path and grinned back at me.

"All right," he called. "I'll go down to the bar and get a lettuce sandwich!"

Then he was gone, and happy as I was, I knew I would miss him terribly.

It began when the old doctor died. I suppose you have heard of Hope Sanatorium and the mineral spring that made it famous.

I have been spring-house girl at the Sanatorium for fourteen years. The first year or so I nearly went crazy. Then I found things were coming my way. I've got the kind of mind that never forgets a name or face and can combine them properly, which isn't common. And when folks came back I could call them at once. The old doctor used to say my memory was an asset to the sanatorium.

He was in the habit of coming to the spring-house every day to get his morning glass of water and read the papers. For a good many years it had been his custom to sit there, in the winter by the wood fire and in summer just inside the open door, and to read off the headlines aloud while I cleaned around the spring and polished glasses.

That winter, with the papers full of rumors that Miss Patty Jennings was going to marry a prince, we'd followed it by the spring-house fire, the old doctor and I, getting angry at the Austrian emperor for opposing it when we knew how much too good Miss Patty was for any foreigner, and then getting nervous and fussed when we read that the prince's mother was in favor of the match and it might go through. Miss Patty and her father came every winter to Hope Springs and I couldn't have been more anxious about it if she had been my own sister.

Well, as I say, it all began the very day the old doctor died. He stamped out to the spring-house with the morning paper about nine o'clock, and the wedding seemed to be all off. The paper said the emperor had definitely refused his consent and had sent the prince, who was his cousin, for a Japanese cruise, while the Jennings

pens to me, Minnie, I'm counting on you to do what you can for the old place. You've been here a good many years, Minnie."

"Fourteen years I have been lading out water at this spring," I said, trying to keep my lips from trembling. "I wouldn't be at home any place else, unless it would be in an aquarium. But don't ask me to stay here and help Mr. Dick sell the old place for a summer hotel. For that's what he'll do."

"He won't sell it," declared the old doctor grimly. "All I want is for you to promise to stay."

"Oh, I'll stay," I said. "I won't promise to be agreeable, but I'll stay. Somebody'll have to look after the spring; I reckon Mr. Dick thinks it comes out of the earth just as we sell it, with the whole pharmacopoeia in it."

Well, it made the old doctor happier, and I'm not sorry I promised, but I've got a joint on my right foot that throbs when it is going to rain or I am going to have bad luck, and it gave a jump then. I might have known there was trouble ahead.

It was pretty quiet in the spring-house that day after the old doctor left. I drew a chair in front of the fire and wondered what I would do if the old doctor died, and what a fool I'd been not to be a school-teacher, which is what I studied for. I was thinking to myself bitterly that all that my experience in the spring fitted me for was to be a mermaid, when I heard something running down the path, and it turned out to be Tillie, the diet cook.

She slammed the door behind her and threw the Finleyville evening paper at me.

"There!" she said. "I've won a cake of toilet soap from Bath-house Mike. The emperor's consented."

"Nonsense!" I snapped, and snatched the paper. Tillie was right; the emperor had! I sat down and read it through, and there was Miss Patty's picture in an oval and the prince's in another, with a turned-up mustache and his hand on the handle of his sword, and between them both was the Austrian emperor.

Well, I sat there and thought it over, Miss Patty, or Miss Patricia, being, so to speak, a friend of mine. They'd come to the Springs every winter for years.

In my wash-stand drawer I'd kept all the clippings about her coming out and the winter she spent in Washington and was supposed to be engaged to the president's son, and the magazine article that told how Mr. Jennings had got his money by robbing widows and orphans, and showed the little frame house where Miss Patty was born—as if she's best anything to do with it. And so now I was cutting out the picture of her and the prince and the article underneath which told how many castles she'd have, and I don't mind saying I was sniffing a little bit, for I couldn't get used to the idea. And suddenly the door closed softly and there was a rustle behind me. When I turned it was Miss Patty herself. She saw the clipping immediately, and stopped just inside the door.

"You, too," she said. "And we've come all this distance to get away from just that."

"Well, I shan't talk about it," I replied, not holding out my hand, for with her, so to speak, next door to being a princess—but she leaned right

And at that minute the door was flung open, and Bath-house Mike staggered in.

"The old doctor!" he gasped. "He's dead, Miss Minnie—died just now in the hot room in the bath-house! One minute he was givin' me the devil for something or other, and the next—I thought he was asleep."

Something that had been heavy in my breast all afternoon suddenly seemed to burst and made me feel faint all over. But I didn't lose my head.

"Does anybody know yet?" I asked quickly. He shook his head.

"Then he didn't die in the bath-house, Mike," I said firmly. "He died in his bed, and you know it. If it gets out that he died in the hot room I'll have the coroner on you."

Miss Patty was standing by the railing of the spring. I got my shawl and started out after Mike, and she followed.

"If the guests ever get hold of this they'll stampede. Start any excitement in a sanatorium," I said, "and one and all they'll dip their thermometers in hot water and swear they've got fever!"

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CHAPTER II.

Well, we got the poor old doctor moved back to his room, and had one of the chambermaids find him there, and I wired to Mrs. Van Alstyne, who was Mr. Dick's sister, and who was on her honeymoon in South Carolina. The Van Alstynes came back at once, in very bad temper, and we had the funeral from the preacher's house in Finleyville so as not to harrow up the sanatorium people any more than necessary.

After it was all over the relatives gathered in the sun parlor of the sanatorium to hear the will—Mr. Van Alstyne and his wife and about twenty more who had come up from the city for the funeral and stayed over on the house.

Well, the old doctor left me the buttons for his full dress waistcoat and his favorite copy of "Gray's Anatomy." I couldn't exactly set up housekeeping with my share of the estate.

They thought that was funny, but a few minutes later they weren't so cheerful. You see the sanatorium was a mighty fine piece of property with a deer park and golf links. We'd had plenty of offers to sell it for a summer hotel, but we'd both been dead against it. That was one of the reasons for the will.

The whole estate was left to Dicky Carter, who hadn't been able to come, owing to his being laid up with an attack of mumps. The family sat up and nodded at one another, or held up its hands, but when they heard there was a condition they breathed easier.

Beginning with one week after the reading of the will—and not a day later—Mr. Dick was to take charge of the sanatorium and to stay there for two months without a day off. If at the end of that time the place was being successfully conducted and could show that it hadn't lost money, the entire property became his for keeps. If he failed it was to be sold and the money given to charity.

Well, the family went back to town in a buzz of indignation, and I carried my waistcoat buttons and my "Anatomy" out to the spring-house and had a good cry. There was a man named Thornburn who was crazy for the property as a summer hotel, and every time I shut my eyes I could see "Thornburn House" over the veranda and children sailing paper boats in the mineral spring.

Sure enough, the next afternoon Mr. Thornburn drove out from Finleyville with a suit case, and before he'd taken off his overcoat he came out to the spring-house.

"Mr. Van Alstyne is back," said Miss Cobb, "but he came alone."

"Alone!" I repeated, staring at her in a sort of daze.

"Alone," she said solemnly, "and I heard him ask for Mr. Carter. It seems he started for here yesterday."

But I'd had time to get myself in hand, and if I had a chill up my spine she never knew it. As she started away I saw Mr. Sam hurrying down the path toward the spring-house, and I knew my joint hadn't throbbed for nothing.

Mr. Sam came in and slammed the door behind him.

"What's this about Mr. Dick not being here?" he shouted.

"Well, he isn't. That's all there is to it, Mr. Van Alstyne," I said calmly. "But he must be here," he said.

"I'm on the train myself," he said. "I waited until it started, and it was off."

What was

hand on the knob. Minnie, the old place will be under the hammer in three weeks, and if you know what's good for you, you'll sign in under the new management while there's a vacancy."

"If I were you," I said, looking him straight in the eye, "I wouldn't pick out any new carpets yet, Mr. Thornburn. I promised the old doctor I'd help Mr. Dick, and I will."

"So you're actually going to fight it out," he said, grinning. "Well, the odds are in your favor. You are two to my one."

"I think it's pretty even," I retorted. "We will be hindered, so to speak, by having certain principles of honor and honesty. You have no handicap."

He tried to think of a retort, and not finding one he slammed out of the spring-house in a rage.

Mr. Van Alstyne and his wife came in that same day, just before dinner, and we played three-handed bridge for half an hour. As I've said, they'd been



"You're Getting Careless, Minnie," He Said, Squinting at It.

on their honeymoon, and they were both sulky at having to stay at the Springs.

After the first rubber Mrs. Van Alstyne threw her cards on the floor and said another day like this would finish her.

She turned her back to her husband, but he pretended to tuck the hair at the back of her neck up under her comb, and she let him do it. As I stooped to gather up the cards he kissed the tip of her ear.

"Listen," he said, "there's a scream of a play down at Finleyville to-night called 'Sweet Peas.' Senator Biggs and the bishop went down last night, and they say it's the worst in twenty years. Put on a black veil and let's slip away and see it."

I think she agreed to do it, but that night after dinner, Amanda King, who has charge of the news stand, told me the sheriff had closed the opera-house and that the leading woman was sick at the hotel.

"They say she looked funny last night," Amanda finished, "and I guess she's got the mumps."

Mumps! My joint gave a throb at that minute.

Mr. Sam wasn't taking any chances, for the next day he went to the city himself to bring Mr. Dick up.

He hadn't come back by the morning of the sixth day, but he wired his wife the day before that Mr. Dick was on the way. But we met every train with a sleigh, and he didn't come. I was uneasy, knowing Mr. Dick, and Mrs. Sam was worried, too.

It had been snowing hard for a day or so, and at eleven o'clock that day I saw Miss Cobb and Mrs. Biggs coming down the path to the spring-house.

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"Who's running the place, anyhow? You?"

"Not—exactly," I explained, "but, of course, when anything comes up they consult me. The housekeeper is a fool, and now that the house doctor's gone—"

"Gone! Who's looking after the patients?"

"Well, most of them have been here before," I explained, "and I know their treatment—the kind of baths and all that."

"Oh, you know the treatment!" he said, eyeing me. "And why did the house doctor go?"

"He ordered Mr. Moody to take his spring water hot. Mr. Moody's spring water has been ordered cold for eleven years, and I refused to change. It was between the doctor and me, Mr. Van Alstyne."

"Oh, of course," he said. "If it was a matter of principle—" He picked up his hat and looked at his watch.

"Eleven thirty," he said, "and no sign of that puppy yet. I guess it's up to the police."

"If there was only something to do," I said, with a lump in my throat, "but to have to sit and do nothing while the old place dies; it's—it's awful, Mr. Van Alstyne."

"We're not dead yet," he replied from the door, "and maybe we'll need you before the day's over. If anybody can sail the old bark to shore, you can do it, Minnie. You've been steering it for years. The old doctor was no navigator, and you and I know it."

The storm stopped a little at three and most of the guests waded down through the snow for bridge and spring water. By that time the afternoon train was in, and no Mr. Dick. Mr. Sam was keeping the lawyer, Mr. Stitt, in the billiard room, and by four o'clock they'd had everything that was in the bar and were inventing new combinations of their own. And Mrs. Sam had gone to bed with a nervous headache.

Senator Biggs brought the mail down to the spring-house at four, but there was nothing for me except a note from Mr. Sam, rather shaky, which said he'd no word yet and that Mr. Stitt had mixed all the cordials in the bar in a beer glass and had had to go to bed.

I nearly went crazy that afternoon. I put salt in Miss Cobb's glass when she always drank the water plain. Once I put the broom in the fire and started to sweep the porch with a fire log. Luckily they were busy with their letters and it went unnoticed, the smell of burning straw not rising, so to speak, above the sulphur of the spring.

Senator Biggs went from one table to another telling how well he felt since he stopped eating, and trying to coax the other men to starve with him.

It's funny how a man with a theory about his stomach isn't happy until he has made some other fellow swallow it.

Then they all began at once. If you have ever heard twenty people airing their theories on diet you know all about it. It always ends the same way: the man with the loudest voice wins, and the defeated ones limp over to the spring and tell their theories to me. They know I'm being paid to listen.

But when things had got quiet—except Mr. Moody dropping nickels into the slot-machine—I happened to look over at Miss Patty, and I saw there was something wrong. She had a letter open in her lap—not one of the blue ones with the black and gold seal that every one in the house knew came from the prince—but a white one, and she was staring at it as if she'd seen a ghost.

CHAPTER III.

I have never reproached Miss Patty, but if she had only given me the letter

to read or had told me the whole truth instead of a part of it, I would have understood, and things would all have been different. It is all very well for her to say that I looked worried enough already, and that anyhow it was a family affair. I should have been told.

All she did was to come up to me as I stood in the spring, with her face perfectly white, and ask me if my Dicky Carter was the Richard Carter who stayed at the Grosvenor in town.

"He doesn't stay anywhere," I said, with my feet getting cold, "but that's where he has apartments. What has he been doing now?"

"You're expecting him on the evening train, aren't you?" she asked. "Don't stare like that; my father's watching."

"He ought to be on the evening train," I said. "I wasn't going to say I expected him. I didn't."

"The wretch!" she cried, "the hateful creature—as if things weren't bad enough! I suppose he'll have to come, Minnie, but I must see him before he sees any one else."

Just then the bishop brought his glass over to the spring.

"Hot this time, Minnie," he said. "Do you know, I'm getting the mineral water habit, Patty! I'm afraid plain water will have no attraction for me after this."

He put his hand over hers on the rail. They were old friends, the bishop and the Jenningses.

"Bishop," she said suddenly, "will you do something for me?"

"I always have, Patty." He was very fond of Miss Patty, was the bishop.

"Then—to-night, not later than eight o'clock, get father to play cribbage, will you? And keep him in the card-room until nine."

"Another escapade!" he said, pretending to be very serious. "Patty, you'll be the death of me yet. Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?"

"Certainly not," said Miss Patty. "Just a dear, slightly bald, but still very distinguished slave!"

"There will be plenty of slaves to kiss your little hand, where you are going, my child," he said. "Sometimes I wish that some nice red-blooded boy here at home—but I dare say it will turn out surprisingly well as it is."

"Bishop, Bishop!" Mrs. Moody called. "How naughty of you, and with your bridge hand waiting to be held!"

Well, I knew Mr. Dick had been up to some mischief; I had suspected it all along. But Miss Patty went to bed, and old Mrs. Hutchins, who's a sort of lady's-maid-companion of hers, said she mustn't be disturbed. I was pretty nearly sick myself. And when Mr. Sam came out at five o'clock and said he'd been in the long-distance telephone booth for an hour and had called everybody who had ever known Mr. Dick, and that he had dropped right off the earth, I just about gave up.

Luckily Mr. Stitt was in bed with a mustard leaf over his stomach and ice on his head, and didn't know whether it was night or morning.



INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR DECEMBER 28

A DAY OF DECISION.
(Review.)

READING LESSON—Joshua 24: Heb. 11:28-31.
GOLDEN TEXT—"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

The lessons for this past quarter, omitting the temperance lesson, cover one of the most interesting periods in the history of Israel: In them there is presented five of Israel's greatest characters, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, Joshua and Caleb; one of the strangest characters in all history—Baalim; and the typical trouble of the nation, Achan. We have presented the strength and weakness, victory and defeat, of four, Moses, Aaron, Miriam, and Joshua.

Israel's History.

The first of the scripture passages presented for the day's reading lesson contains the farewell discourse of Joshua. In it he surveys Israel's history from the days of Terah to the moment they possessed Canaan, emphasizing that in it all God was directing and operating. He then appeals to them to serve Jehovah and to put away all other Gods. The alternative is, that with such evidence before their eyes, if it seemed evil to serve Jehovah, they had choice between the gods their fathers abandoned beyond the river and those they had found in the land. As for himself his choice was made, "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." After repeated declarations of fealty on their part Joshua, entered into a covenant with them that they were to serve Jehovah. The passage taken from Hebrews ought to begin at verse thirty as the Passover was not considered in this quarter's study. The writer fastened upon the victory at Jericho and the saving of Rahab as two of the greatest events of this period of which we have been studying for the reason of their great value as regards faith. The lessons of the quarter begin with the murmuring of the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt, passes through all the experiences of failure, discipline and deliverance, and ends with this consecration service. We read that "Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, and had known all the work of the Lord, that he had wrought for Israel."

Moses leads out of Egypt (a type of sin), through the wilderness experiences, but could not lead them into the land; Joshua took up the work where Moses left off and led them into the promised possession; but he was not able to lead them into that perfect rest which only comes from a perfect conformity to the will of God. The message of the Book of Hebrews is that of the son who fulfills all that these great leaders of the past failed to do.

Recapitulation.

Omitting the temperance lesson (Nov. 9) six of these lessons deal with Moses as the leader, and in five we have Joshua as the leader of Israel.

I. Under Moses' Leadership.

Lesson I. Moses' Cry for Help, Num. 11:10-18, 24, 25. (1) Complaint and controversy, vv. 10-15; (2) Comfort and Counsel, vv. 16-18, 24, 25.

Lesson II. Jealousy and Envy Unleashed, Num. ch. 12. (1) The Accusation, vv. 1, 2; (2) The Arrest, vv. 4, 5; (3) The Arraignment, vv. 6-8; (4) The Judgment, vv. 9-10; (5) The Intercession, vv. 11-12.

Lesson III. The Report of the Spies, Num. 13:1-3, 25-33. (1) The Spies, vv. 1-3; (2) The Majority Report, vv. 25-29; (3) The Minority Report, vv. 30-33; (4) The Sequel, ch. 14.

Lesson IV. The Sin of Moses and Aaron, Num. 20:1-13. (1) The People's Petition, vv. 1-5; (2) God's Plan, vv. 6-8; (3) Moses' Mistake, vv. 9-13. (a) Deception. (b) Pride. (c) Self-glory. (d) Disobedience.

Lesson V. Balak and Balaam, Num. 22:1-6, 24:10-19. (1) The Call to Curse, 22:1-6; (2) The Wayside Challenge, 22:22-35; (3) The Changeling Message, ch. 24.

Lesson VI. Temperance Lesson. Lesson VII. The Death of Moses, Deut. 34:1-12. (1) The Old Leader, vv. 1-8; (2) The New Leader, v. 9; (3) A Great Character, vv. 10-12.

II. Under Joshua's Leadership. Lesson VIII. Joshua the New Leader, Josh. 1:1-9. (1) The Call; (2) The Charge; (3) The Counsel; (4) The Companionship.

Lesson IX. Crossing the Jordan, Josh. 3:1-17. (1) The Leader, vv. 7, 8; (2) Those Led, vv. 9-12; (3) The Dry Ground, vv. 14-17.

Lesson X. The Fall of Jericho, Josh. 6:1-11, 14-20. (1) G. vv. 1-5; (2) Joshua's Test, 6:5-11; (3) The O. vv. 14-20.



ROCKING

Are Being Told That Stop This Time Practice.

At rocks the cradle and, metaphorically, rules no longer to enjoy unbroken notable functions.

movement began opening to moth.

to moth.

to moth.

to moth.

say the concoctors of the anti-rocking decree, may cause a child to grow up unhealthy, exacting and petulant. A bas le cerceau!